

CLAIMS:

We claim:

1. A method for producing a composite help view for an aggregation of applications, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining at least two separate help documents, each of said at least two separate help documents having an association with a corresponding one of separate interface units aggregated together into a single aggregated view;

combining said at least two separate help documents into a composition of help documents corresponding to said single aggregated view; and,

rendering said composition of help documents in a help system view responsive to a request for help initiated in said single aggregated view.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said rendering step further comprises the steps of:

loading an index produced from a navigation view disposed within said single aggregated view;

forming a help system navigation view based upon said index; and,

rendering said help system navigation view along with said rendering of said composition of help documents.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said rendering step comprises the step of rendering both a view of said composition of help documents, and individual views of said separate help documents.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said rendering step further comprises the steps of:

obtaining an image map of said single aggregated view;

rendering said image map in a help system view;

activating a rendering of said view of said composition of help documents responsive to a selection of a portion of said image map not formed from a view of one of said separate interface units; and,

otherwise activating a rendering of a single one of said individual views of said separate help documents responsive to a selection of a portion of said image map formed from a view of a corresponding one of said separate interface units.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

updating said single aggregated view to include at least one different interface unit;

changing said composition of help documents to include a new separate help document corresponding to said at least one different interface unit; and,

rendering said changed composition of help documents in a help system view responsive to a request for help initiated in said updated single aggregated view.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of restricting help information in said composition of help documents for a particular user to reflect restrictions in said single aggregated view imposed upon said user.

7. A system for producing a composite help view for an aggregation of applications comprising:

an application aggregator configured to aggregate individual interface units into a single aggregated view;

a help system configured to render a help system view comprising composite help documentation comprising at least two help documents, each of said at least two help documents corresponding to one of said individual interface units; and,

help invoking logic coupled to said help system and disposed in said single aggregated view.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein said individual interface units are application portlets, wherein said single aggregated view is a portal, and wherein said application aggregator is disposed within a portal server.

9. The system of claim 7, wherein said help system is configured as a plug-in to an integrated development environment.

10. The system of claim 7, wherein said help system further comprises a configuration for generating a personalized bookshelf for said at least two help documents.

11. A machine readable storage having stored thereon a computer program for producing a composite help view for an aggregation of applications, the computer

program comprising a routine set of instructions which when executed by the machine cause the machine to perform the steps of:

obtaining at least two separate help documents, each of said at least two separate help documents having an association with a corresponding one of separate interface units aggregated together into a single aggregated view;

combining said at least two separate help documents into a composition of help documents corresponding to said single aggregated view; and,

rendering said composition of help documents in a help system view responsive to a request for help initiated in said single aggregated view.

12. The machine readable storage of claim 11, wherein said rendering step further comprises the steps of:

loading an index produced from a navigation view disposed within said single aggregated view;

forming a help system navigation view based upon said index; and,

rendering said help system navigation view along with said rendering of said composition of help documents.

13. The machine readable storage of claim 11, wherein said rendering step comprises the step of rendering both a view of said composition of help documents, and individual views of said separate help documents.

14. The machine readable storage of claim 13, wherein said rendering step further comprises the steps of:

- obtaining an image map of said single aggregated view;
- rendering said image map in a help system view;
- activating a rendering of said view of said composition of help documents responsive to a selection of a portion of said image map not formed from a view of one of said separate interface units; and,

- otherwise activating a rendering of a single one of said individual views of said separate help documents responsive to a selection of a portion of said image map formed from a view of a corresponding one of said separate applications.

15. The machine readable storage of claim 11, further comprising the steps of:

- updating said single aggregated view to include at least one different interface unit;

- changing said composition of help documents to include a new separate help document corresponding to said at least one different interface unit; and,

- rendering said changed composition of help documents in a help system view responsive to a request for help initiated in said updated single aggregated view.

16. The machine readable storage of claim 11, further comprising the step of restricting help information in said composition of help documents for a particular user to reflect restrictions in said single aggregated view imposed upon said user.